SPURIOUS, HEARSAY, AND
OBSCURE LINCOLN
QUOTATIONS - COMPILATIONS - COMMENTARY

71.2002 OE 04981

Abraham Lincoln Quotations & Sayings

Spurious

Spurious, Hearsay, and Obscure Quotations

Compilation & Commentary

Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

From the files of the

Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

71.2009 085 04981

LINCOLN LORE

Bulletin of the Lincoln National Life Foundation - - - - - - - Dr. Louis A. Warren, Editor,
Published each week by The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana

Number 552 FORT WAYNE, INDIANA November 6, 1939

SOURCES OF TRADITIONAL QUOTATIONS

The question of authenticity is constantly being raised with reference to certain quotations credited to Abraham Lincoln but which cannot be found over his signature. Sources of six of the statements most often mentioned follow:

Study and Get Ready

Miss Anna O'Flynn of Vincennes, Indiana, interviewed in 1895 Mrs. Elizabeth Crawford who is said to have recalled the following conversation with Abraham Lincoln when he was but a youth:

Mrs. Crawford—"What do you want to be?"

Lincoln—"I'll be President!"

Mrs. Crawford—"You'd make a purty President with all your tricks and jokes, now wouldn't you?"

Lincoln—"Oh, I'll study and get ready, and then the chance will come."

Miss O'Flynn's manuscript containing the interview was made available to Miss Ida M. Tarbell who used the story on page 62 of her *Early Life of Abraham Lincoln* which was published in 1896. Of course sixty-five years is a long time to remember a conversation, and, while the gist of it may have been recalled by Miss Crawford, one would hesitate to identify the quotation in question as a verbatim statement of Abraham Lincoln.

Religion

A eulogy on Abraham Lincoln delivered before the General Assembly of Connecticut on Thursday, June 8, 1865, contains a brief statement about Lincoln's religious faith which is often quoted though its origin is seldom cited. The speaker on this occasion was Henry C. Deming, a lawyer, a member of Congress from Connecticut, and a close friend of Lincoln.

In the course of his address Mr. Deming said: "I am here reminded of an impressive remark, which he (Lincoln) made to me upon another occasion and which I shall never forget. He said, he had never united himself to any church, because he found difficulty in giving his assent, without mental reservation, to the long complicated statements of Christian doctrine, which characterize their Articles of belief and Confessions of Faith. 'When any church,' he continued, 'will inscribe over its altar, as its sole qualification for membership the Saviour's condensed statement of the substance of both law and Gospel "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself!" that church will I join with all my heart and all my soul'."

Fooling the People

No quotation credited to Abraham Lincoln has been more generally accepted as genuine, yet without documentary support, than the following lines:

"You can fool all the people some of the time
And some of the people all the time
But you cannot fool all the people all of the time."

The *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* in 1905 interviewed many people who claimed to have heard Lincoln repeat the memorable triplet, and, with hardly any exception, the concensus of opinion was that it was used in an address which Lincoln made at Clinton, Illinois, in 1858, yet it is not found in any of Lincoln's printed speeches. One affiant testified that the statement referred to fooling the people on the slavery issue and recalled the very place it occurred in Lincoln's address.

Sabbath Day

A New York Sabbath Committee called on President Lincoln during the Civil War, and one of the members some time later reported that Lincoln used the following language:

"As we keep or break the Sabbath Day we nobly save or meanly lose the last best hope by which man rises."

Lincoln delivered his second Annual Message to Congress on December 1, 1862, and in the course of his remarks he spoke of freedom for both the slave and the free and then concluded, "We shall nobly save or meanly lose the last, best hope of earth."

It would appear that the alleged statement Lincoln is said to have made about the Sabbath Day has been confused with this more famous authentic quotation.

The Crisis

By far the widest circulated spurious Lincoln quotation appears to have been printed first in a book entitled *A Gold Conspiracy*, which was distributed by the Progressive American Publishing Company of New York in 1896 and written by Captain Stephen Nicolette. On page 33 are found these words alleged to have been spoken by Lincoln when the war was nearing its end:

"I see in the near future a crisis approaching that unnerves me and causes me to tremble for the safety of my country. As a result of the war corporations have been enthroned and an era of corruption in high places will follow and the money power of the country will endeavor to prolong its reign by working upon the prejudices of the people until the wealth is aggregated in a few hands and the Republic is destroyed. I feel at this moment more anxiety for the safety of my country than ever before, even in the midst of war. God grant that my suspicion may prove groundless."

This quotation has found its way into numerous publications and it appears in *The Congressional Record* for Tuesday, December 15, 1931, in a speech delivered by Representative Louis T. M'Fadden of Pennsylvania. Mr. M'Fadden, however, was under the impression that the excerpt was from a letter Lincoln wrote to a man by the name of Elkins, yet there is no evidence that Lincoln ever wrote or spoke the words, referring to the crisis.

Prohibition

Whenever the prohibition question is brought to the front the following statement said to have been made by Lincoln is often quoted:

"Prohibition will work great injury to the cause of temperance. It is a species of intemperance itself for it goes beyond the bounds of reason in that it attempts to control man's appetite by legislation in making crimes out of things that are not crimes. A prohibitory law strikes a blow at the very principles on which our government was founded. I have always been found laboring to protect the weaker classes from the stronger and I can never give my consent to such a law as you propose to enact. Until my tongue be silenced in death I will continue to fight for the rights of man."

Atlanta, Georgia, was in the midst of a local option campaign in 1887, and the alleged Lincoln statement above was widely circulated in the campaign.

Some time after the excitement of the campaign had disappeared, Colonel Samuel W. Small was told by Colonel John B. Goodwin, who had been the director of the Anti-Prohibition forces, that he himself composed the alleged words of Lincoln to influence the colored voters to vote the wet ticket.

LINCOLN LORE

Bulletin of the Lincoln National Life Foundation - - - - - Dr. Louis A. Warren, Editor
Published each week by The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana

Number 750 FORT WAYNE, INDIANA August 23, 1943

DID LINCOLN SAY IT?

One of the most certain proofs of the immortality of a man is the tendency to emphasize the importance of the epigrams he used. The anthology of Lincoln's pointed sayings, approaches in wisdom, the proverbs of Solomon, and they have contributed immeasurably to the fame of the prairie philosopher. It is not known, generally, that the writings and printed speeches of Abraham Lincoln, in total wordage exceed the complete works of Shakespeare.

Another element which confirms the eternal fame of a man is the tendency to put in his month, as it were, words presenting some certain philosophy of life which the ghost writer desires to advance. We are now in that stage of the Lincoln apotheosis when a great mass of spurious quotations are being credited to Lincoln which he never recited.

The first Lincoln token which the editor of *Lincoln Lore* can remember receiving, and which he now cherishes with much satisfaction, is a motto post card sent to him while in college by his mother. This is the epigram on the card:

Success
By Abraham Lincoln
To a Young Man

"There is no success save it be self-wrought—Your employer will generally reward those who generously labor for him—Those who are kind, charitable and just will inspire a return of love and gratitude—It is a fact that 'Like begets like,' and that if we desire from our fellows the rewards of the world, sacrifices must be made, or we shall neither merit nor receive them."
Copyrighted by R. L. Welles, 1907.

Apparently the quotation is spurious and while Lincoln's famous statement on the same subject—"Success does not so much depend on external help as on self reliance"—is quite familiar, the origin of the postal motto, if it be genuine, through all these years has remained unidentified.

There is still another classification of remarks credited to Abraham Lincoln which are nothing more or less than propaganda, and these appear periodically when any important political or social question is discussed. The latest contribution in this field is a quotation about Lincoln's attitude toward labor, which seems to have been coined for the present labor and management controversy.

From four widely separated sources there has come to the Foundation, queries about the authenticity of the following statement, alleged to have been made by Abraham Lincoln.

"All that serves labor serves the Nation. All that harms labor is treason to America. No line can be drawn between these two. If any man tells you he loves America, yet hates labor, he is a liar. If any man tells you he trusts America, yet fears labor, he is a fool. There is no America without labor, and to fleece the one is to rob the other."

The earliest record of this quotation, thus far traced, appeared in *The Country Parson*, a Georgia paper and according to the contributor the words were spoken by Lincoln on October 1, 1854.

A query about the authenticity of this quotation was sent to *American Notes and Queries*, by George Seldes, in his memorandum appearing in the October 1842 issue of that publication.

The quotation is often found in an abbreviated form with these two sentences omitted, "No line can be drawn between these two," and the concluding phrase, "and to fleece the one is to rob the other." The word "helps," used twice in the first sentence, seems to be interchangeable with "serves."

October 1, 1854, came on a Sunday, and there is no record of any speech Lincoln made on that day. It is likely he was in Springfield or en route to Springfield from Metamora, Ill. The state fair was about to open in the capital city and on Tuesday Lincoln was in attendance.

While Lincoln held both labor and capital as invaluable to the American system, it is rather doubtful if he used such expressions as "liars" and "fools," in referring to classes or groups of citizens.

While we are on the question of spurious Lincoln writings, perhaps some of the readers of *Lincoln Lore* would be willing to submit chapter and verse for the following alleged quotations by the Emancipator, all of which appear in print and some of them in conspicuous places.

"Teach economy. That is one of the first and highest virtues. It begins with saving money."

"The next fight will be between Capital and Labor, and Labor would have to carry the yoke."

"I don't know who my grandfather was, and I am much more concerned to know what his grandson will be."

"I believe a man should be proud of the city in which he lives, and that he should so live that his city will be proud that he lives in it."

"If ever this free people—if this government itself is ever utterly demoralized, it will come from this incessant human wriggle and struggle for office, which is but a way to live without work."

LINCOLN LORE

Bulletin of the Lincoln National Life Foundation - - - - - - Dr. Louis A. Warren, Editor
Published each week by The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana

Number 1057 FORT WAYNE, INDIANA July 11, 1949

SPURIOUS, HEARSAY AND OBSCURE LINCOLN QUOTATIONS

The compilation of Lincoln's correspondence, writings and recorded speeches, which represents a total wordage greater than the complete works of Shakespeare, or even the Bible, is so voluminous that no exhaustive concordance of them ever has been published. A laborious task confronts one who attempts to locate the time and place when a particular Lincoln axiom or phrase was first used.

Supplementing this large collection of documentary data is an almost unlimited source of hearsay quotations credited to Lincoln, which are scattered through all types of literature from notable biographies to comic magazines. This classification which will always be looked upon with suspicion by objective historians, contains statements said to have been made by Lincoln. Many of them were not recorded verbatim at the time they were supposed to have been spoken, so this classification leads one into the field of folklore and tradition. It contains, very naturally, a tremendous amount of source material which has been woven into the Lincoln story. Here again Lincoln's style of expression must be weighed and the time and place element given serious consideration before it is even admitted as a hearsay item.

Quotations, supposed to have been used by Lincoln, which come to the Foundation for verification and identification are first checked against an extensive card index of timely excerpts from authentic sources. If the staff is unable to discover the origin of the excerpt in these files, a similar catalogue of sayings credited to Lincoln is approached. If still unsuccessful in locating the phrase, the statement is checked against a file labeled "obscure." Here it rests until such a time as further investigation indicates whether it should be added to one of the two above classifications or be labeled "doubtful."

References thus held in suspense are then classified with respect to their probable origin by attempting to decipher the objective which motivated them. There are four main divisions of this series. One compilation suggests that the author was trying to recall an actual statement of Lincoln's with the result that a "paraphrase" quotation is submitted. Other aphorisms imply that a person has attempted to put in his own words a "sentiment" Lincoln is known to have held. A third group of papers suggest that some one has credited an axiom to Lincoln because the quotation sounded like Lincoln's "diction." Still another collection of axioms indicate that they are "spurious," created and issued for any one of a dozen or more propaganda purposes.

First lines of as many examples as room will permit are submitted at the close of paragraphs emphasizing these four groups. The references which accompany them suggest where they may be found, or where their genuineness has been questioned. The Foundation would be pleased to hear from any one who can supply evidence which would support their authenticity.

PARAPHRASE

Most of the paraphrase quotations are found in the statements Lincoln is alleged to have made with possibly part of the quotation being genuine. This is well illustrated by the many different versions we find of some Lincoln axiom attempting to repeat a Lincoln quotation, without referreing to the original statement.

"There is an important service in which the government is distinct from the administration. . . ."

Sat. Eve. Post 10-25-41

"Money is the creature of Law. . . ."

Conquest of Poverty by McGeer. p. 186.

SENTIMENNT

Some of the most famous of the Lincoln sayings which have become so well known to students of the Emancipator, for lack of an immediate recording, fall into this classification. Only two of this vast number of alleged Lincoln remarks on which more supporting evidence is desired are presented here.

"If I ever get a chance to hit that thing (slavery) I'll hit it hard."

Herndon & Weik, p. 64.

"I will get ready and study and then the chance will come."

Tarbell, *Early Life of Abraham Lincoln*, p. 62.

DICTION

There are a great many quotations credited to Lincoln merely because they seem to be couched in Lincoln's peculiar way of putting things. Any trite saying that has a Lincolnesque style of expression would probably be credited to the martyred President.

"I like to see a man proud of the place in which he lives. . . ."

—Quotation on wall of Museum of the City of New York.

"I am not bound to win but I am bound to be true. . . ."

—Advertisement, Michigan Mutual Liability Company, Detroit.

"Teach economy, that is one of the first virtues. It begins with saving money."

—Publication, Fidelity Investment Association, Wheeling, W. Va.

"A lawyer's time and advice are his stock in trade."

—Plaquqe by the Allen Smith Co., Indianapolis.

SPURIOUS

When a man achieves the honorable position in the world order that Lincoln has attained, any statement he has made on any controversial subject becomes important. Many of these spurious writings are deliberately penned for the purpose of giving emphasis to viewpoints among political, social, economic and reform groups. (See the forged Lincoln letter used to influence Woodrow Wilson. *Lincoln Lore* No. 615).

"I see in the near future a crisis approaching that unnerves me. . . ."

—American Prophetic League, Inc., Release No. 19.

"All that serves labor serves the nation. All that harms labor is treason. . . ."

Lincoln Lore, No. 750.

"If you purchase a ton of steel rails from England. . . ."

Quarterly Journal of Economics, May 1921.

"Prohibition will work a great injury to the cause of temperance."

Lincoln Lore, No. 552.

LINCOLN LORE

Bulletin of the Lincoln National Life Foundation - - - - - - Dr. Louis A. Warren, Editor
Published each week by The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana

Number 1085 FORT WAYNE, INDIANA January 23, 1950

AXIOMS CREDITED TO LINCOLN, UNAUTHENTIC

During the past year or more there has been used in several trade journals a series of sayings arranged in antithesis which have been credited erroneously to Abraham Lincoln. On February 2, 1949 they appeared in The Congressional Record and later on they were separately printed. A full page display in Look magazine for January 17, 1950, featured the somewhat revised Congressional version which promises a much wider distribution and therefore should be given some notice in Lincoln Lore.

The ten axioms were first released in 1942 by The Committee for Constitutional Government at New York. The secretary of the committee writes that the sayings were worked up by the committee "out of material and suggestions that came to it from its own advisers and from the outside." He further continues, "We do not attribute them to Lincoln." The axioms were first printed in a leaflet containing some authentic words of Lincoln on one side and on the other side the ten axioms under the caption: "The Ten Points—They Cost So Little." An editor copying the data for his magazine inadvertently inserted a credit line to Abraham Lincoln—a case of mistaken authorship.

About the only instance where one of the "cannot" axioms approaches a similar wording to one of Lincoln's actual sayings is found in point ten. On July 1, 1854, Lincoln wrote, "In all that the people can individually do for themselves, government ought not to interfere."

In order that this bulletin may do something more than call attention to the error in authorship made inadvertently, we are submitting in bold type, under each of the axioms prepared by the Committee for Constitutional Government, genuine statements of Abraham Lincoln properly authenticated which do at least carry the sentiments expressed by the widely circulated axioms.

1. You cannot bring prosperity by discouraging thrift.

"Property is the fruit of labor; property is desirable; it is a positive good in the world. That some should be rich shows that others may become rich, and hence is just encouragement to industry and enterprise."

Washington, March 21, 1864

2. You cannot strengthen the weak by weakening the strong.

"We proposed to give all a chance, and we expected the weak to grow stronger, the ignorant wiser, and all better and happier together."

Springfield, Fragment, July 1, 1854.

"Capital has its rights, which are as worthy as any other rights."

Washington, Message to Congress, Dec. 3, 1861

3. You cannot help small men by tearing down big men.

"Let not him who is houseless pull down the house of another, but let him work diligently and build one for himself, thus by example assuring that his own shall be safe from violence when built."

Washington, March 21, 1864.

"There is no permanent class of hired laborers amongst us. . . . The hired laborer of yesterday labors on his own account today and will hire others to labor for him tomorrow."

Springfield, Fragment, July 1, 1854.

4. You cannot help the poor by destroying the rich.

"It is best for all to leave each man free to acquire property as fast as he can. Some will get wealthy. I don't believe in a law to prevent a man from getting rich, it would do more harm than good. So while we do not propose any war on capital, we do wish to allow the humblest man an equal chance to get rich with everybody else."

New Haven, Conn., March 6, 1860.

"Men who are industrious and sober and honest in the pursuit of their own interests should after a while accumulate capital and after that should be allowed to enjoy it in peace."

Cincinnati, Sept. 7, 1859.

5. You cannot lift the wage-earner by pulling down the wage-payer.

"If they (industrious, sober and honest men) should choose, when they have accumulated it, (capital) to use it to save themselves from actual labor, and hire other people to labor for them, is right."

Cincinnati, Sept. 17, 1859.

"The results of a year or two's labor is a surplus of capital . . . in course of time he has enough capital to hire some new beginner."

Cincinnati, Sept. 17, 1859.

6. You cannot keep out of trouble by spending more than your income.

"No country can sustain in idleness more than a small percentage of its members."

Milwaukee, Sept. 30, 1859.

"Universal idleness would speedily result in universal ruin."

Springfield, Dec. 1, 1846.

"You do not work much merely because it does not seem to you that you could get much for it. This habit of uselessly wasting time is the whole difficulty."

Letter to John J. Johnston, Jan. 2, 1851.

7. You cannot further the brotherhood of man by inciting class hatred.

"Let us discard all this quibbling about this man and the other man, this race and that race and the other race being in favor . . . and unite as one people throughout the land."

Chicago, July 10, 1858.

"We feel that all legal distinction between individuals of the same community founded on any such circumstance as color, origin, and the like are hostile to the genius of our institutions and incompatible with the true history of American liberty."

Cincinnati, May 31, 1841.

8. You cannot establish sound security on borrowed money.

"An individual who undertakes to live by borrowing soon finds his original means devoured by interest and next, no one left to borrow from, so it must be with a government."

Whig Circular, March 4, 1843.

9. You cannot build character and courage by taking away man's initiative and independence.

"That each one of you through this free government which we enjoyed have an open field and a fair chance for your industry, enterprise and intelligence."

Washington, Aug. 22, 1864.

"We must inquire what it is that has given us so much prosperity . . . This cause is, that every man can make himself."

Kalamazoo, Mich., Aug. 27, 1856.

10. You cannot help men permanently by doing for them what they could and should do for themselves.

"The legitimate object of government is to do for the people what needs to be done but which they cannot, by individual effort, do at all, or do so well, for themselves."

Springfield, Fragment, July 1, 1854.

Strictly personal

How to put ideas in Abe's head

CHICAGO DAILY NEWS, Tuesday, March 18, 1969

By Sydney J. Harris

My recent column on that fake Lincoln quotation brought a lot of letters from readers, some of whom were quick to point out that Lincoln did express "similar sentiments" on various occasions, and that the fake quote was really a "compendium" of his ideas.

But this is precisely the evil of taking statements out of context and making a synthetic fabric out of individual strands. Lincoln said many things on many subjects, and unless we study the whole body of his written and spoken words, in the full progression of his time, we are doing him an injustice and violating historical truth.

AS AN EASY example, I can right this minute compose a mosaic of Lincoln sayings that would highly commend him to the Communist Party and make him out to be a full-fledged radical, simply by ignoring everything he said on the other side of the question:

"These capitalists generally act harmoniously, and in concert, to fleece the people." (Speech, Illinois Legislature, January, 1837.)

"Any people anywhere being inclined and having the power, have the right to rise up and shake off the existing government, and form a new one that suits them better. This is a most valuable, a most sacred right." (Speech, House of Representatives, 1848.)

"If by the mere force of numbers a majority should deprive a minority of any clearly written constitutional rights, it might, in a moral point of view, justify revolution—certainly would if such a right were a vital one." (First Inaugural Address, March 4, 1861.)

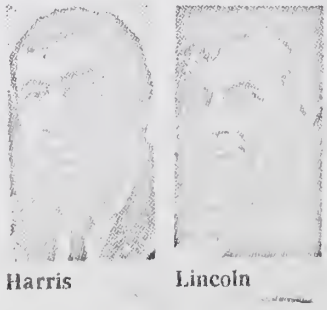
"This country, with its institutions, belongs to the people who inhabit it. Whenever they shall grow weary of the existing government, they can exercise their constitutional right of amending it, or their revolutionary right to dismember or overthrow it." (Ibid.)

"Labor is prior to and independent of capital. Capital is only the fruit of labor, and could never have existed if labor had not first existed. Labor is the superior of capital, and man deserves much the higher consideration." (Message to Congress, Dec. 3, 1861.)

"I know the trials and woes of working men, and I have always felt for them. I know that in almost every case of strikes, the men have a just cause for complaint." (To a delegation from the Machinists' and Blacksmiths' Union, 1863.)

"Whenever there is a conflict between human rights and property rights, human rights must prevail." (Congressional Record, quoted, May 12, 1944.)

I can give you any Lincoln you want—pro-labor, pro-capital, pro-Negro, anti-Negro—if only you and me select parts from the whole.



Harris Lincoln

(Response to letter from Donald Phillips 10/87
- Sarah McNair Vosmeier

in the two major indices to Lincoln's writings: Harnsberger, and Archer H. Shaw's The Lincoln Encyclopedia (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1950).

***

"I am slow to learn and slow to forget that which I have learned. My mind is like a piece of steel..."

You cite this as having been recalled by William H. Herndon. I skimmed his Life of Lincoln and Abraham Lincoln, but did not see it in either book. Gross uses this quotation (p. 19) and dates it as c. 1860.

***

"I have no policy. I pass my life in preventing the storm from blowing down the tent, and I drive in the pegs as fast as they are pulled up."

You cite this as coming from Hertz's Lincoln Talks. It is attributed to Prince de Joinville. De Joinville is probably describing a private conversation with Lincoln because Basler does not include any Lincoln writings to de Joinville, who was an artist from France working in the United States during the war.

***

"Moral principle is a looser bond than pecuniary interest."

I could not find this quotation in any of our quotation indices and it is probably not a direct quotation. You cite it as a speech in October of 1856. Basler does not include any direct quotations of Lincoln's speeches in October, 1856, although he includes some newspaper reports of them, and this quotation does not appear in any of Basler's reports. If you have access to a University library, you might try to get copies of the newspapers published in the towns where he spoke. For instance, he spoke in Peoria, Ill. on October 17, 1856---try Peoria Weekly Republican. He was in Belleville, Ill. on October 22---try Belleville Weekly Advocate. On October 27 he was in Pike County Illinois, but I don't have a newspaper title for that area.

***

"Well, you have got a good case in technical law, but a pretty bad one in equity and justice. You'll have to get some other fellow."

I could not find a source for this quotation in any of our indices (other than the one you give: recalled by John H. Littlefield in Lincoln Talks, p.

to win this case for you. I couldn't do it. All the time while standing talking to that jury I'd be thinking: "Lincoln, you're a liar," and I believe I should forget myself and say it outloud.

---recalled by John H. Littlefield
Lincoln Talks, p 54.

54). Basler does not have any Lincoln writings to Littlefield. Further, I could not find any biographic information on Littlefield.

***

"I am not bound to win, but I am bound to be true. I am not bound to succeed, but I am bound to live up to what light I have. I must stand with anybody..."

Dr. Louis A. Warren researched this quotation and did not find it anywhere in Lincoln's writings. He speculated that it might be a garbled quotation of Lincoln's October 16, 1854 speech in Peoria. In that speech he said "I say, stand with anybody that stands right. Stand with him while he is right and part with him when he goes wrong." (Basler, II, p. 273).

***

"Whenever there is a conflict between human rights and property rights, human rights must prevail."

I could not find this quotation in any of our quotation indices. I also skimmed through the Congressional Record you cited, to no avail.

***

"If we should all be turned out tomorrow, and could come back here in a week, we should find our places filled by a lot of fellows doing just as well as we did..."

This is from L. E. Chittendon's Recollections of President Lincoln and His Administration (New York: Harper and Bro., 1891) p. 377. You date the remark as June 29, 1864.

***

"As labor is the common burthen of our race, so the effort of some to shift their share of the burthen on to the shoulders of others is the great, durable, curse of the race."

Note: your source was slightly inaccurate in its quotation. I have quoted it correctly above. This quotation is from an undated fragment of a speech. Basler dates it as September 17, 1859 (Basler, III, p. 462). Earlier, in John G. Nicolay and John Hay's Complete Works of Abraham Lincoln (New York: Tandy-Thomas, 1894, v. II, p. 185), it was dated July 1, 1854.

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(response to letter from Donald Phillips 10/87
- Sarah McNair Vosmeier)

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(Response to a letter from Donald Phillips 10/87 - Sarah McNair Vosmeier)

"Sitting here, where all the avenues to public patronage seem to come together in a knot, it does seem to me that our people are fast approaching the point where it can be said..."

I was not able to find this in any of our quotation indices. Further, I went though all of Lincoln's writings on patronage which Basler lists for 1861 (the year you dated the remark), and did not find it.

***

"This human struggle and scramble for office, for a way to live without work, will finally test the strength of our institutions."

From Herndon's Life of Lincoln (New York: Da Capo Press, 1983, reprint) p. 410. Presumably, Lincoln said this during the late summer of 1861, when Herndon visited Lincoln in Washington.

***

"I know the trials and woes of working men, and I have always felt for them. I know that in almost every case of strikes, the men have just cause for complaint." supposed to be a reply to delegation from the Machinists + Blacksmiths' Union 1863

I could not find this remark in any of our quotation indices. Further, Basler does not list any document written to the Machinists and Blacksmiths Union. In fact, there were not many major strikes in the United States until after the Civil War, and so it seems unlikely that Lincoln would have commented on strikes.

***

"The strongest bond of human sympathy outside the family relation should be one uniting all working people of all nations and tongues and kindreds."

Letter to New York Workingmen's Association, March 21, 1864. Basler, VII, p. 259.

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"So I turn it over to you with full confidence that you will do what is just and right; only begging you, my dear General, to do nothing in reprisal for the past..."

(Response to a letter from Donald T Phillips 10/87
s - Sarah McNair Vosmeier)

"Sitting here, where all the avenues to public patronage seem to come together in a knot, it does seem to me that our people are fast approaching the point where it can be said that seven-eighths of them are trying to find how to live at the expense of the other eighth. -1861

I was not able to find this in any of our quotation indices. Further, I went though all of Lincoln's writings on patronage which Basler lists for 1861 (the year you dated the remark), and did not find it.

***

"This human struggle and scramble for office, for a way to live without work, will finally test the strength of our institutions."

From Herndon's Life of Lincoln (New York: Da Capo Press, 1983, reprint) p. 410. Presumably, Lincoln said this during the late summer of 1861, when Herndon visited Lincoln in Washington.

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"I know the trials and woes of working men, and I have always felt for them. I know that in almost every case of strikes, the men have just cause for complaint."

I could not find this remark in any of our quotation indices. Further, Basler does not list any document written to the Machinists and Blacksmiths Union. In fact, there were not many major strikes in the United States until after the Civil War, and so it seems unlikely that Lincoln would have commented on strikes.

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"The strongest bond of human sympathy outside the family relation should be one uniting all working people of all nations and tongues and kindreds."

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"So I turn it over to you with full confidence that you will do what is just and right; only begging you, my dear General, to do nothing in reprisal for the past ----only what is necessary to ensure security for the future; and reminding you that we are not fighting against a foreign foe, but our brothers, and that our aim is not to break their spirits, but only to bring them back to their old allegiance. Conquer by kindness---let that be our policy.

(supposed to be letter from General William S Rosecrans)

I could not find this letter in any of our quotation indices, and I also could not find it in Basler's collected works. The only source seems to be Emanuel Hertz's Lincoln Talks New York: Viking Press, 1939 p. 423-425.

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"When I die, I want it said of me by those who know me best, that I always plucked a thistle and planted a flower when I thought a flower would grow."

This is a spurious quotation.

***

"With public sentiment, nothing can fail; without it, nothing can succeed. Consequently he who molds public sentiment goes deeper than he who enacts statutes or pronounces decisions."

From the debate with Stephen A. Douglas at Ottawa on August 21, 1858. Basler, III, p. 27.

***

"I am for the people of the whole nation doing just as they please in all matters which concern the whole nation; for that of each part doing just as they choose in all matters which concern no other part; and for each individual doing just as he chooses in all matters which concern nobody else."

From a fragment of a speech, dated October 1, 1858 by Nicolay and Hay (IV, p. 231). Basler does not list the speech in October, and so there must be questions about the dating or authenticity of this fragment.

***

"No law is stronger than is the public sentiment where it is to be enforced. Free speech and discussion, and immunity from whip and tar and feathers, seem implied by the guarantee to each state of a republican form of government."

This is probably a spurious quotation. Gilbert A. Tracy, in his Uncollected Letters of Abraham Lincoln (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1917, p. 171) quotes it from a pamphlet entitled "Some Lincoln Correspondence With Southern Leaders...." However, the pamphlet itself was based on a "copy" of a Lincoln letter, and Basler does not include the letter in his Collected Works.

"NICE GUYS FINISH SEVENTH"

FALSE PHRASES, SPURIOUS SAYINGS,

AND FAMILIAR MISQUOTATIONS

RALPH KEYES



HarperCollins*Publishers*

1992

knew: "*E pluribus unum*, my friends, *sine qua non*." According to Jackson biographer John William Ward, this story was still being repeated at Harvard in the 1950s. By most accounts Jackson actually received his degree in silence. Ward thinks the Latin parody was made up by detractors to ridicule the president.

Abraham Lincoln

Most of the presidents after Jackson were not quotable enough to be misquoted. Then we get to Abraham Lincoln. Even before his death in 1865, a pertinent remark from the Great Emancipator clinched many an argument. Lincoln is the most misquoted president largely because he's the one who is most quoted. The fact that America's sixteenth president didn't say much of what speakers and authors want him to have said hasn't stopped them from quoting him anyway. During the past century spurious Lincoln quotes have been used by management, labor, free traders, protectionists, wets, drys, and sundry others to prop up their causes.

Much apocryphal Lincolniana takes the form of retroquotes. But even when he was alive, the president himself estimated that half of the anecdotes involving him were either spurious or misattributed. Since he did his own share of borrowing, misquotations fly in all directions when it comes to Abraham Lincoln.

Apocryphal Lincolnisms

YOU CAN FOOL ALL OF THE PEOPLE SOME OF THE TIME; YOU CAN EVEN FOOL SOME OF THE PEOPLE ALL OF THE TIME; BUT YOU CAN'T FOOL ALL OF THE PEOPLE ALL OF THE TIME.

By tradition Lincoln made this observation on September 2 or September 8, 1858, in a speech at Clinton, Illinois. Other sources say he said it in Bloomington, Illinois on May 29, 1856. Or it might have been at some unknown location in 1862. Or was it 1863 in Washington? No one is quite sure. These words do not appear in any of Lincoln's published works. No newspaper account of the various speeches in which they might have been used report this observation. Our only evidence that Lincoln said you can fool all the people, etc., is the memory of those who

think they heard him say so, usually long after his death. This saying gained widest circulation in a 1904 book called *Abe Lincoln's Yarns and Stories*. According to its author, Pennsylvania Republican leader Alexander K. McClure, the President discussed fooling the people during a conversation with a visitor. Lincoln scholars don't give much credence to this citation or any other.

TELL ME WHAT BRAND GRANT DRINKS. I'LL SEND A BARREL TO MY OTHER GENERALS. (wording varies)

This is a favorite Lincoln chuckle, his alleged response to complaints that Ulysses S. Grant drank too much whiskey. Since this fanciful story circulated during Lincoln's lifetime, he was able to debunk it personally. Lincoln thought the anecdote was inspired by an earlier one in which George II of England said of the allegation that General James Wolfe was mad: "If General Wolfe is mad I hope he bites some of my other generals."

(1) YOU CANNOT BRING ABOUT PROSPERITY BY DISCOURAGING THRIFT. (2) YOU CANNOT STRENGTHEN THE WEAK BY WEAKENING THE STRONG. (etc.; 10 points defending conservative free enterprise principles)

This list of maxims is beloved by free enterprise zealots. For decades they plastered it on wall hangings, calendars, pamphlets, and advertisements. As recently as 1976 Tiffany's ran "Lincoln's" ten points in an ad, then had to take the heat when reminded that these sayings were actually written by the Reverend William J. H. Boetcker in 1916. In this case we have clear evidence of how the misattribution originated. In 1942 a group called the Committee for Constitutional Government distributed a leaflet called "Lincoln on Limitations." One side had an authentic Lincoln remark. The other side had the ten points, attributed to the "Inspiration of Wm. J. H. Boetcker." In time Boetcker's name was forgotten and authorship of the ten points was reassigned to his better known leaflet-mate. When *Look* magazine published this apocryphal Lincolnism in 1950, *Time* took its sister publication to task. "In printing what Lincoln hadn't said," *Time* snickered, "nobody had felt the need

to print something that he did say, 'You can fool all the people . . . [etc.]."

Lincoln's Borrowing

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE, BY THE PEOPLE, FOR THE PEOPLE

Thirty-three years before Abraham Lincoln used this phrase in his Gettysburg Address, Daniel Webster spoke of "people's government, made for the people, made by the people and answerable to the people." In the 1850s, clergyman Theodore Parker used various versions of this credo in many anti-slavery speeches. Lincoln's law partner William Herndon later gave him a copy of Parker's published speeches. According to Herndon, before composing his Gettysburg Address Lincoln marked the words "democracy is direct self-government, over all the people, by all the people, for all the people" in an 1858 Parker sermon.

WITH MALICE TOWARD NONE, WITH CHARITY FOR ALL

In his 1838 response to an invitation to attend a celebration of slavery's abolition in the British West Indies, John Quincy Adams wrote, "In charity to all mankind, bearing no malice or ill-will to any human being, and even compassionating those who hold in bondage their fellow-men, not knowing what they do." Lincoln said it better, but Adams said it first.

HE REMINDS ME OF THE MAN WHO KILLED HIS PARENTS, THEN PLEADED FOR MERCY BECAUSE HE WAS AN ORPHAN.

Lincoln is one of many to whom this quip is credited. Truman's vice president, Alben Barkley, also liked this simile. So did William Howard Taft. Leo Rosten calls it the classic definition of "chutzpah." The gag seems to have originated in a much longer yarn called "A Hard Case," which was written in the early 1860s by Lincoln's favorite humorist, Artemus Ward.

"I remember a good story when I hear it," Lincoln once admitted, "but I never invented anything original. I am only a retail dealer."

Mangled Lincolnisms

While running for President in 1988, George Bush told an audience, "As Abraham Lincoln said, '**Here I stand, warts and all.**' " Lincoln was full of physical imperfections, but no evidence exists that he made such an observation. More than two centuries before Lincoln's presidency, Oliver Cromwell admonished a portrait painter to "use all your skill to paint my picture truly like me, and not flatter me at all; but remark all these roughnesses, pimples, warts and everything as you see me, otherwise I will never pay a farthing for it." (William Safire got a Bush speechwriter to take the fall for goofing up this one.) Bush needn't have felt too bad. A Jimmy Carter television spot once quoted Lincoln as saying, **"A statesman thinks of the future generations, while a politician thinks of the coming election."** This was actually said by nineteenth century clergyman James Freeman Clarke. On another occasion a Carter speechwriter altered Lincoln's **"last best hope of earth"** to "last best hope *on* earth," thinking no one would notice. Someone did. Writer Richard Hanser, who makes a hobby of catching misquotes, immediately spotted the error and alerted William Safire. Ronald Reagan subsequently embellished Carter's altered version. In his own speeches Reagan frequently used the phrase "last best hope of man on earth," without mentioning either Carter or Lincoln. George Bush, in turn, used the phrase "last great hope of man on earth" during the 1988 presidential campaign.

Theodore Roosevelt

Theodore Roosevelt was more quotable than the average president, and more inventive, to boot. The many phrases he contributed to our language include "hat in the ring," "pussyfooting," and "lunatic fringe." For all of his originality, TR was no less likely than any other politician to requisition existing material. Long before he got credit for coining it, the term "weasel word," had appeared in a magazine article. "Muckraker"—from Roosevelt's 1906 description of overzealous journalists as **"raking the muck"**—drew on John Bunyan's "the Man With the Muck Rake" in *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678). Thirty-five years before Roosevelt applied the term to journalists, an American politician had already been described as raking in muck.

• When *People* quoted jet-setter Hélène Rochas as saying "After thirty, you get the face you deserve," it noted that this paraphrased an observation by George Orwell. On April 17, 1949, the last words written in Orwell's manuscript notebook were, **"At fifty, everyone has the face he deserves."** But Orwell was hardly the only one to whom this thought had occurred. According to Clifton Fadiman, when Lincoln was taken to task for turning down an older job applicant whose face put him off,

the President told a cabinet member, "Every man over forty is responsible for his face." Others think Lincoln said this about those over thirty. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., said House Speaker Sam Rayburn told him this anecdote about Lincoln, except the cutoff was age fifty. *The Viking Book of Aphorisms* attributed "A man of fifty is responsible for his face" to Lincoln's secretary of war, Edwin Stanton. A collection of Mae West quotes included, "A man has more character in his face at forty than at twenty—he has suffered longer." In 1956 Coco Chanel was quoted as saying, "Nature gives you the face you have at twenty, it is up to you to merit the face you have at fifty." This was several years after Orwell's journal entry, of course, as was Albert Camus's 1960 line in *The Fall,* "Alas, after a certain age every man is responsible for his face." In his novel *The American Ambassador,* Ward Just wrote of a character, "if at forty everyone has the face he's earned . . ."

As usual with such a quote, numbers vary in the retelling. For ready reference:

	FACE AT OR AFTER			
	30	40	50	UNSPECIFIED
Orwell			X	
Lincoln I		X		
Lincoln II	X			
Lincoln III			X	
Stanton			X	
West		X		
Chanel			X	
Camus				X
Just		X		
Rochas	X			

misquotations have: Robert Walpole's "Every man has his price," Herbert Hoover's "Prosperity is just around the corner," and Charles Colson's "I'd walk over my own grandmother to get Richard Nixon elected."

In some cases misquotes don't just discredit individuals but entire professions. When he was chief justice of the Supreme Court, Warren Burger noted in a libel decision, "Consideration of these issues inevitably recalls the aphorism of journalism attributed to the late Roy Howard that **'too much checking on the facts has ruined many a good news story.'** " Staff members of Indiana University's Roy Howard Memorial Center could find no evidence that the late editor-in-chief of the Scripps-Howard newspaper chain ever made such a comment. They let Burger know. In Burger's revised opinion, this saying was cited as an unattributed aphorism. The public deserved better fact checking from its chief justice.

Checking facts doesn't just prove that many presumed quotes are actually misquotes. Sometimes sayings thought to be spurious prove to be authentic. For example:

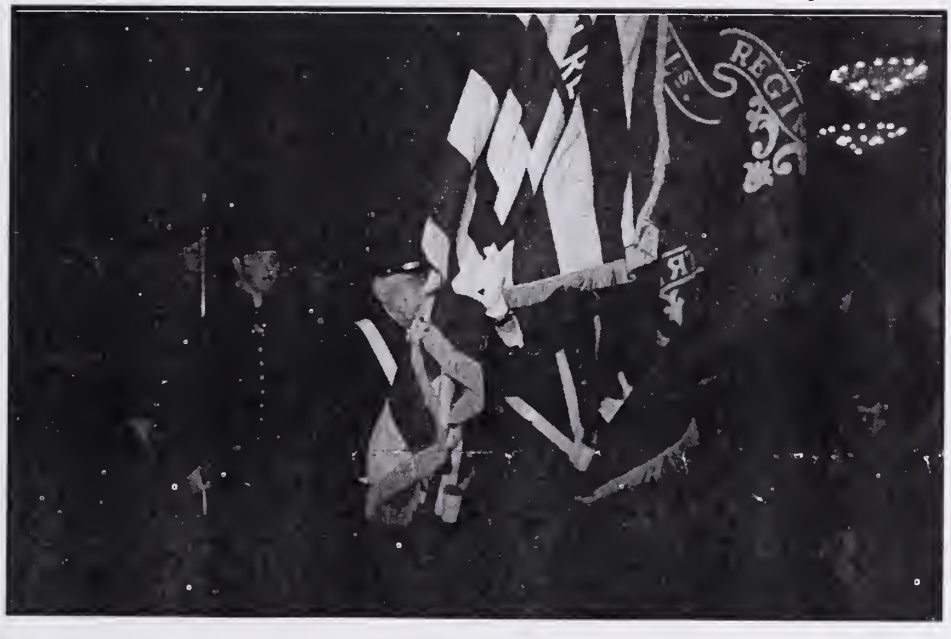
• Some quote mavens have concluded that Lincoln's comment **"The Lord prefers common-looking people. That is the reason he makes so many of them"** is apocryphal. Such collectors usually suggest that this observation originated without evidence in a 1928 book on U.S. Presidents. Twenty years earlier, however, in 1908, that comment appeared in John Hay's published diary. Hay, Lincoln's private secretary, wrote on December 23, 1863: "The President to-night has a dream:—He was in a party of plain people, and, as it became known who he was, they began to comment on his appearance. One of them said:—'He is a very common-looking man.' The President replied:—'The Lord prefers common-looking people. That is the reason he makes so many of them.' " While not conclusive, Hay's diary entry suggests that this is a genuine Lincoln saying, not a spurious one.

• For years it was taken for granted that Mark Twain said, **"Everybody talks about the weather but nobody does anything about it."** This became one of his most repeated lines. But a new generation of quote sleuths traced the remark to an 1897 editorial in the *Hartford Courant*. That editorial was unsigned, its contents unattributed. The

A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words

Those of you who were unable to attend the February 12 symposium and banquet missed a wonderful time. C-SPAN taped the symposium to air the week of June 28 as part of their Presidential Series. The following pictures (this page and page eight) offer a brief glimpse into the grand banquet festivities. The 114th Regiment Illinois Volunteer Infantry (Reactivated) presented the colors while one of the Association's oldest members, Judge Abraham Lincoln Marovitz, gave both the invocation and benediction. Donald R. Tracy presided over his first banquet as president of the Association. Near the end of the dinner, attendees were treated to period music by the 33rd Regiment Illinois Volunteer Infantry Band. Noted author James B. Stewart offered thoughtful insights into the Clinton presidency. Earlier that day, the Senate voted to acquit President Clinton on all articles of impeachment. Stewart offered some brief and appropriate comments on how the country might begin to heal in the aftermath of the Senate vote. Keeping with the tradition of the Abraham Lincoln Association, the audience stood and sang the Battle Hymn of the Republic before taking a moment of silence to receive Judge Marovitz's benediction.

Make your plans now to attend next year's events. The theme of the symposium will be "Abraham Lincoln Reputation," and feature Hans Trefousse, Bruce Tap, Bryon Andreasen with comments by John R. Sellers. We are privileged to have Doris Kearns Goodwin as the banquet speaker.



114th Regiment Illinois Volunteer Infantry (Reactivated)

Lincoln Never Said That

The much touted "information revolution" has undoubtedly changed the way we conduct business and personal communication. It has allowed for fast access to information databases and the ability to sort through large quantities of information to pinpoint material of specific interest to us. The downside to online information is that the quality control of the database may not be consistent. We are all too familiar with recent reports about President Clinton's personal life that appeared as a story online, repeated endlessly in newspaper columns, radio reports, and television and cable networks only to be ques-

continued on page 7

News of Members

John T. Trutter, board member, suffered a heart attack earlier this year but is recovering nicely. He was honored by the Illinois and Michigan Canal Corridor Association for his long years of service, especially his recent tenure as chairman of the Association, with the Canal Boat Captain's Award. Lincoln College honored **Cullom Davis**, former president of the Abraham Lincoln Association, at its May graduation, receiving the honorary Doctor of Humane Letters. **Douglas L. Wilson**, board member, received the prestigious Lincoln Prize for his book, *Honor's Voice: The Transformation of Abraham Lincoln*. The Lincoln Prize is endowed by the Gilder Lehrman Foundation and is given annually through Gettysburg College. **Gordon Leidner** compiled a collection of Lincoln quotes tentatively titled, *Commitment to Honor: A Unique Portrait of Abraham Lincoln in His Own Words*, to be published by Rutledge Hill Press. **Allen Guelzo** has just completed a manuscript, *Redeemer President: Abraham Lincoln and the Ideas of Americans*, that will be published this autumn by William Eerdmans Company.

A long time member and friend, Dr. Robert Jess Patton, died on December 7, 1998. A special professorship is being established in his honor by the Memorial Medical Center Foundation and the Southern Illinois University School of Medicine. Memorial gifts may be sent to: The Robert Jess Patton Memorial Fund, Memorial Medical Center Foundation, 1 Memorial Plaza, Springfield, Illinois 62701. In early April, Vesta Angle, wife of the late Lincoln scholar Paul M. Angle, died in Chicago. Sally Thomas, wife of the late Lincoln scholar Benjamin P. Thomas, died on April 20 in Springfield.

Please send member news to Thomas F. Schwartz, Abraham Lincoln Association, 1 Old State Capitol Plaza, Springfield, Illinois 62701. All submissions will be edited to fit space limitations.

Lincoln Never Said That

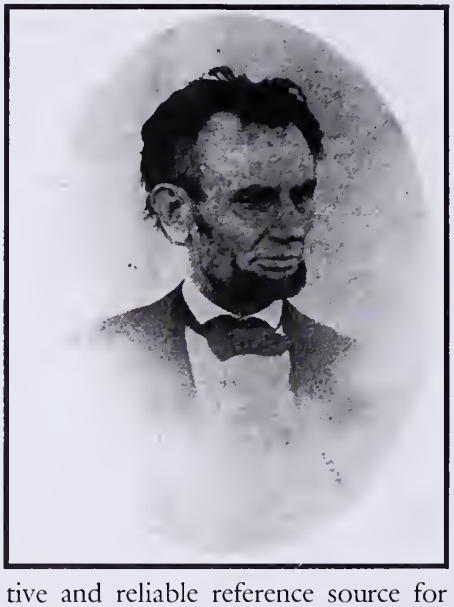
continued from page 5

tioned later. Some were demonstrated to be all too true while many others were simply idle gossip. The question becomes: "What can you trust to be true online?"

Senator Trent Lott appeared on *Meet the Press*, March 22, 1998, and proudly quoted Abraham Lincoln to make his point: "I'm a firm believer in the people. If given the truth, the people can be depended upon to meet any national crisis. The great point is to bring them the real facts." Fine sentiments indeed. But did Lincoln make such a statement? Lott's staff obtained the quote from a Lexus/Nexus search. It appeared on the database twenty-eight times and in each instance attributed the words to Lincoln. A search of Lincoln's own words, however, failed to locate any of the three sentences.

Lincoln used the word "firm" eighty-five times in his writings, the word "people" 2,292 times, and the word "believer" two times. Yet there are no instances where the words "firm," "believer," and "people" appear in close proximity in any of Lincoln's writings. When matches occurred with other key words in Lincoln's writings such as "great" (1,751 times) and "point" (1,049 times), the phrase "great point" appeared only eight times. In all instances, none match or come close to the meaning expressed in the alleged quote.

If these words are not found in Lincoln's letters and writings, couldn't they be words attributed to him by others? The answer is obviously yes. But attributions pose their own set of difficulties. First, the only authoritative and reliable reference source for Lincoln attributions is Don Fehrenbacher and Virginia Fehrenbacher, *Recollected Words of Abraham Lincoln,* and Paul M. Zall, *Abe Lincoln Laughing.* Zall keeps his focus limited to the jokes and funny stories told by Lincoln, whereas the Fehrenbachers cast a wider net. The Fehrenbachers provide evaluations of every attribution, providing the reader with an informed judgment about the quotes' authenticity. Most of the quotes in the volume, however, receive a C grade indicating that the words were recorded well after the actual date Lincoln allegedly uttered them. The other limitation of the volume is that it covers only those attributions that are most frequently cited in historical studies. The actual number of recollections and recorded interviews containing Lincoln attributions well exceeds those in the Fehrenbacher and Zall compilations.



Even if all the attributions could be collected onto a database, to what extent are they reflections of Lincoln's philosophy? This is a major problem with recollected materials. The Fehrenbachers offer a thorough and thoughtful overview of the problems inherent in using attributions: "The distinction between direct and indirect discourse is useful in the case of contemporaneously recorded quotations because the one may well be verbatim recall or something close to it, while the other may well be nothing more than paraphrase or summary. But in the case of quotations recorded noncomtemporaneously, the distinction is less appropriate because verbatim recall is much less likely, and the employment of direct discourse may well be misrepresentative."

In comparing the Lincoln attribution cited by Senator Lott off

continued on next page

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

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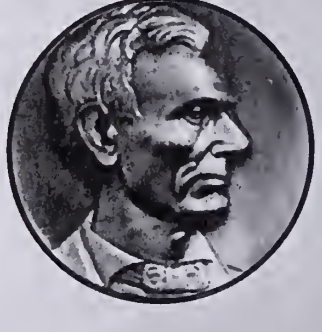
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continued from previous page

Lexus/Nexus to the Fehrenbachers compilation, nothing matches. Reverend Edward N. Kirk offers the closest match when he claimed that Lincoln told him, "I have faith in the people. They will not consent to disunion. The danger is, they are misled. Let them know the truth, and the county is safe" (Fehrenbacher, p. 278). Kirk recalled Lincoln saying this to him in July, 1864, and recounted these words to the Boston *Journal*, reprinted in the *Liberator*, May 19, 1865. When added to other expressions in the interview, such as Lincoln's fear for the country's future and premonitions of death that would prevent him from seeing a successful end to the war, the Fehrnbachers concluded that this "like all such talk, recalled after the assassination, should probably be viewed with a certain amount of skepticism." They assigned Kirk's recollections the grade of D.



Abraham Lincoln Marovitz



James B. Stewart

For the People

A Newsletter of the Abraham Lincoln Association
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U.S. News & World Report, Feb 17, 1997 v122 n6 p62(2)

Looking for Lincoln: historians sort through the words others put in his mouth.
(Abraham Lincoln; includes related excerpt) *Lewis Lord.*

Abstract: Pres Lincoln has had more quotes attributed to him than any other American, but as historians have discovered, many are unreliable. Recent books by P M Zall, Gabor Boritt and Don and Virginia Fehrenbacher sort through supposed Lincoln sayings and separate the authentic from the dubious.

Full Text: COPYRIGHT 1997 U.S. News and World Report Inc.

Every schoolchild knows the Abraham Lincoln that's revered on Presidents' Day with solemn speeches and earnest editorials. He's the martyr who freed the slaves and saved the republic. Less familiar is the lusty Lincoln, the frontier hero that ordinary folk cherished a century or more ago in an extensive cycle of uninhibited stories. Like the tale that began with a barge ramming a railroad bridge:

The railroad sued, and its team of high-powered lawyers gave the jury convincing evidence the barge owner was at fault. Then rose Lincoln, the barge owner's sole attorney. "My learned opponents have presented an impressive case," he said. "There is no question that they have their facts absolutely right. But they have drawn completely wrong conclusions." The jurors inexplicably broke into laughter, headed for the jury room, and came back with a verdict for Lincoln's client.

The stunned losers approached the triumphant Lincoln. "What did you do to the jury?" the lawyers asked.

"Well, boys," Lincoln replied. "When the court adjourned for lunch, I happened into a saloon where the jurors were eating and told them a little story. A story about a farmer who was working in his barnyard one day when his 10-year-old boy came rushing up to him, all excited. 'Pa,' said the boy, 'come quick. The hired man and Sis are up in the haymow, and he's a-pulling down his pants and she's a-liftin' up her skirt. Pa, they're gettin' ready to pee all over our hay.' 'Son,' said the farmer, 'you've got your facts absolutely right, but you've drawn a completely wrong conclusion.' "

Plausible. Ray Allen Billington, the late historian, repeated the haymow story in the foreword of P.M. Zall's Abe Lincoln Laughing: Humorous Anecdotes from Original Sources by and about Abraham Lincoln (University of Tennessee Press, 1995, $14). "That anecdote has the ring of a perfect Abraham Lincoln story," Billington wrote. "It is plausible, appealing, earthy, and just the sort of thing that he might have said." But it's not among the 325 "reliable" Lincoln anecdotes in Zall's book. The scholar searched but found no evidence that the scene ever happened. Hence it and many other dubious Lincoln stories were left out.

What Zall did with the plethora of Lincoln anecdotes--include and evaluate the apparently authentic, delete the seemingly apocryphal--other historians are doing with collections of his words. Their task is daunting: No American is more quoted--or misquoted--than Lincoln. Their work also is important: The image of Lincoln, the historical as well as the mythical, has been shaped to an uncommon degree by

statements that other people put in his mouth, often to suit their own purposes.

Stanford's Don Fehrenbacher and his wife, Virginia, spent 12 years compiling the Recollected Words of Abraham Lincoln (Stanford University Press, 1996, $60), a collection of 1,900 quotations attributed to Lincoln by more than 500 of his contemporaries. The scholars rated the authenticity of quotations with letter grades: A for a direct quote the listener wrote down soon after hearing it; B for a quickly recorded indirect quote; C for quotes reported weeks, months, or years later; D for one "about whose authenticity there is more than average doubt"; E for those "probably not authentic."

No fooling. One now familiar line the Fehrenbachers examined was far from familiar to 19th-century America: "You can fool all the people some of the time and some of the people all of the time, but you can't fool all the people all of the time." The saying apparently first emerged in print in 1901 in Lincoln's Yarns and Stories; the book identified the person who allegedly heard Lincoln as "a caller at the White House." Years later, two old-timers claimed they had heard Lincoln say it in an 1856 address in Illinois, but a news account of the speech didn't mention it. The Fehrenbachers give the old-timers' recollections a D. The evidence, the scholars say, "suggests that this is a case of reminiscence echoing folklore or fiction."

A D also goes to a boyhood Lincolnism that was recalled by Abe's cousin Dennis Hanks: "Denny, the things I want to know is in books. My best friend's the man who'll get me one." (Hanks, unreliable at any age, remembered this at 90.) And strong doubts are cast on an acquaintance's claim that Lincoln, as president-elect, spoke longingly of courting Ann Rutledge. "I did honestly and truly love the girl," Lincoln allegedly said, "and think often, often of her now." (Close friends never recalled such talk.)

The Fehrenbachers apply their lowest grade to words a spiritualist attributed to Lincoln in seances. (Evidence he attended any is weak.) Another E is given to ex-priest Charles Chiniquy's claim that Lincoln said Jefferson Davis and the pope were allies. (Chiniquy, the scholars say, was "perhaps the biggest liar in Lincoln literature.") Also dismissed is an official's recollection that Lincoln said he wanted to "remove the whole colored race of the slave states into Texas." (There's no evidence of such a scheme.)

Lincolnisms without an identifiable source are deemed so spurious that the Fehrenbachers don't even try to rate them. No one, for example, seems to know who, if anyone, heard Lincoln say, "The best thing about the future is that it comes only one day at a time." Or "Tact [is] the ability to describe others as they see themselves." Or "Better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to speak out and remove all doubt."

And then there is the clearly bogus, like "Lincoln's Ten Cannots," including: "You cannot strengthen the weak by weakening the strong. You cannot help the wage earner by pulling down the wage payer. You cannot help the poor by destroying the rich." In 1950, historians first showed the cannots to be the 1916 creation of a Pennsylvania preacher. Still, a 1991 Ann Landers column and a 1992 speech by Ronald Reagan to the GOP national convention gave Lincoln the credit.

How can a reader avoid the dubious? Collections of Lincoln's writings, including a two-volume edition that Don Fehrenbacher compiled for the Library of America, are as reliable as they are rich. A new book edited by Gettysburg College's Gabor Boritt, Of the People, By the People, For the People (Columbia University Press, 1996, $20), gathers short quotes solely from Lincoln's writings, his speeches, or reliable news reports. Boritt's volume forgoes a dubious Lincolnism on lying--"No man has a good enough memory to make a successful liar"--for a real one: A lie is "a specious and fantastic arrangement of words, by which a man can prove a horse chestnut to be a chestnut horse." Also included are

Lincoln's pithy depictions of the U.S. Navy: "Uncle Sam's web-feet" ... an obese woman: "a fair match for Falstaff" ... the press: "those villainous reporters."

The mix of fact and fiction that now envelops the great man's name could be aptly described in another of Boritt's Lincolnisms: "So hard is it to have a thing understood as it really is."

Mag.Coll.: 87L0399

Bus.Coll.: 100T1436

Article A19134679

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Lincoln Never Said That

By Thomas F. Schwartz, Ph.D.

Anyone who has glanced at a cereal box, herbal tea package, inspirational book, or restaurant place mat has probably encountered a Lincoln quotation that rings hollow. Lincoln is often quoted and misquoted by public officials and celebrities. Members of Congress have access to researchers at the Library of Congress to keep right with Lincoln's words. But even this resource cannot keep spurious Lincoln's quotations from being uttered by members of Congress.

The authoritative reference work of Lincoln's letters and speeches is the *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, compiled and published by the Abraham Lincoln Association. Fast approaching its golden anniversary, the *Collected Works* reflects both the strengths and weaknesses of documentary editing in its infancy. While new Lincoln documents have been discovered, there has never been a serious attempt to locate all the letters written to Lincoln. Moreover, technology now allows for placing a color image of the original documents on a database with the transcriptions, allowing for a comparison of the original text with the transcribed text. All of these features will comprise a new more comprehensive and authoritative edition, *The Papers of Abraham Lincoln*, being undertaken by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency.

One might well ask, "What difference does it make if he did or didn't say this?" It makes a big difference to researchers trying to understand the past. Separating authentic words, reflecting a historical actor's thinking on a topic, from inauthentic or attributed words, reflecting the thinking of someone other than the historical actor, is significant in obtaining a clear understanding of the past. Many of the spurious quotations are so modern in tone and character that most people will recognize that the words were devised to express and plead a special cause or interest. The idea of enlisting famous and admired historical actors from the past to advance a modern agenda is familiar. In tracking down when certain statements appeared, one can often tie it to a modern controversy or debate.

A greater problem is dealing with attributions. Individuals recollecting Lincoln's exact words began to appear immediately following his death. Perhaps the most accessible source of these recollected statements is found in Carl Sandburg's six-volume biography of Abraham Lincoln. Recollected words cannot be dismissed out of hand because most of the informants knew Lincoln or are part of an oral tradition going back to Lincoln. Don and Virginia Fehrenbacher's *Recollected Words of Abraham Lincoln* (Stanford, 1996) offer the most extensive and informed discussion of the promise, problems and pitfalls in using recollections.

Finally, this list is only a beginning. It is incomplete and will be updated. Some of the items listed have a link to a more thorough discussion of the origins and evolution of the quote.

1. Allegedly written to Thomas Elkins on November 21, 1864:

   "We may congratulate ourselves that this cruel war, which has cost a vast

treasure of blood and money, is almost over. But I see in the future a crisis approaching which fills me with anxiety. As a result of the war, corporations have become enthroned, and an era of corruption in high places will follow. The money power of the country will endeavor to prolong its rule by preying upon the prejudice of the people, until all wealth is concentrated in a few hands, and the republic destroyed. I feel at this time more anxiety for the future of my country than at any time in the past, even in the midst of war."

2. Quoted by Senator Trent Lott on *Meet the Press*, March 22, 1998

"I'm a firm believer in the people. If given the truth, the people can be depended upon to meet any national crisis. The great point is to bring them the real facts."

3. Allegedly written to Colonel Edmund "Dick" Taylor sometime in December, 1864:

"I have long determined to make public the origins of the greenback and tell the world that it is one of Dick Taylor's creations. You had always been friendly to me, and when troublous times fell on us, and my shoulders, though broad and willing, were weak, and myself surrounded by such circumstances and such people that I knew not whom to trust, then I said in my extremity, 'I will send for Col. Taylor; he will know what to do.' I think it was in January 1862, on or about the 16th, that I did so. You came, and I said to you, 'What can we do?' Said you, 'Why, issue Treasury notes bearing no interest, printed on the best banking paper. Issue enough to pay off the Army expenses, and declare it legal tender.' Chase thought it a hazardous thing, but we finally accomplished it, and gave to the people of this Republic the greatest blessing they ever had-their own paper to pay their own debts, and I take great pleasure in making it known. How many times have I laughed at you telling me plainly that I was too lazy to be anything but a lawyer."

4. A popular undated letter found on internet sites that allegedly was written to the headmaster of a school in which one of Lincoln's sons was studying:

"My son will have to learn, I know, that all men are not just, all men are not true. But teach him also that for every scoundrel there is a hero; that for every selfish politician, there is a dedicated leader. Teach him that for every enemy there is a friend.

It will take time, I know; but teach him if you can, that a dollar earned is of far more value than five found.

Teach him to learn to lose and also to enjoy winning, steer him away from envy, if you can.

Teach him the secret of quiet laughter. Let him learn early that bullies are easiest to lick.

Teach him, if you can, the wonder of books...but also give him quiet time to ponder the eternal mystery of birds in the sky, bees in the sun and flowers on a green hillside.

In school, teach him it is far more honorable to fail than to cheat...

[Teach him to have faith in his own ideas, even if everyone tells him they are wrong.]

Teach him to be gentle with [gentle] people and tough with the tough.

Try to give my son the strength not to follow the crowd when everyone is getting on the bandwagon.

Teach him to listen to all men; but teach him also to filter all he hears on a screen of truth and take only the good that comes through.

Teach him, if you can, how to laugh when he is sad.

Teach him there is no shame in tears. Teach him to scoff at cynics and to be beware of too much sweetness.

Teach him to sell his brawn and brain to the highest bidders, but never to put a price on his heart and soul.

Teach him to close his ears to a howling mob...and to stand and fight if he

thinks he's right.

Treat him gently; but do not cuddle him, because only the test of fire makes fine steel.

Let him have the courage to be impatient, let him have the patience to be brave. Teach him always to have sublime faith in humankind.

This is a big order, but see what you can do. He is such a fine little fellow my son!"

5. Allegedly uttered by Lincoln although the occasion and the informant source remain undetermined:

   "I like to see a man proud of the place in which he lives. I like to see a man live in it so that his place will be proud of him."

6. The "Ten Points" appear every February 12 in newspaper ads honoring Abraham Lincoln. In fact, these aphorisms are from the pen of Reverend William John Henry Boetcker (1873-1962).

   - You cannot bring about prosperity by discouraging thrift.
   - You cannot strengthen the weak by weakening the strong.
   - You cannot help small men by tearing down big men.
   - You cannot help the poor by destroying the rich.
   - You cannot lift the wage-earner by pulling down the wage-payer.
   - You cannot keep out of trouble by spending more than your income.
   - You cannot further the brotherhood of man by inciting class hatred.
   - You cannot establish sound security on borrowed money.
   - You cannot build character and courage by taking away a man's initiative and independence.
   - You cannot help men permanently by doing for them what they could and should do for themselves.

7. Unknown source:

   "Well, for those who like that sort of thing, I should think it is just about the sort of thing they would like."

8. Cited by Douglas MacArthur in 1950 speech after his release as commander of the United Nations forces in Korea. It is actually from a poem by Ella Wheeler Wilcox:

   " To sin by silence, when they should protest, makes cowards of men."

9. Attributed to Lincoln in a Lutheran temperance pamphlet circa 1948. It is actually from a temperance address of the Reverend James Smith, Abraham Lincoln's friend and minister at the First Presbyterian Church in Springfield, Illinois.

   "The liquor traffic is a cancer in society, eating out its vitals and threatening destruction, and all attempts to regulate it will aggravate the evil. There must be no attempt to regulate the cancer; it must be eradicated, not a root must be left behind, for until this is done, all classes must continue in danger of becoming victims of strong drink."

10. Undoubtedly the most famous questioned utterance of Abraham Lincoln allegedly part of a speech delivered in Clinton, Illinois, September, 1858:

    "You can fool all the people some of the time and some of the people all the time, but you cannot fool all the people all the time."

FORT WAYNE IN

Historian gets honest about Abe

By John O'Connor
Associated Press

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. – When it comes to Abraham Lincoln, some of the people are fooled all of the time.

Remarks attributed to the quotable 16th president have popped up in everything from TV commercials to speeches by famous generals, presidents and even recent anti-war protesters.

Too often, they are phrases that Lincoln never uttered, experts at the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency say.



Lincoln

"It's simply Lincoln's own status as a cultural exemplar that make these spurious quotations seem credible," said Rodney Davis, co-director of the Lincoln Studies Center at Knox College in Galesburg.

"He seems to provide validation for just about anything anybody wants to have validated, and if you can't find a Lincoln quote, you make one up."

Quotes by a minister, a poet and even an actor portraying Lincoln on an episode of "Star Trek" have been attributed to the president, according to Illinois state historian Thomas Schwartz.

The preservation agency has added a page to its Web site that exposes famous sayings Lincoln never made.

Among the more famous is this one: "You can fool all the people some of the time and some of the people all of the time, but you cannot fool all of the people all of the time."

Allegedly part of a September 1858 speech in Clinton, the sentence does not show up in the text printed in the local newspaper, Schwartz said. The best evidence comes from two people in 1910 recollecting that Lincoln said it in 1856.

Davis hopes the Web site, which also highlights fake Lincoln documents, will remind people "that there is such a thing as intellectual or scholarly honesty."

Misattributed to Lincoln

These are some of the phrases frequently – and wrongly – attributed to Abraham Lincoln, according to Illinois state historian Thomas Schwartz:

"Corporations have become enthroned, and an era of corruption in high places will follow . . . until all wealth is concentrated in a few hands, and the republic destroyed."

Allegedly from a November 1864 letter. Lincoln's son, Robert Todd Lincoln, has traced this quote to a seance in Iowa in which Lincoln supposedly spoke through a "medium."

"There's no honorable way to kill, no gentle way to destroy. There's nothing good in war except its ending."

Attributed to Lincoln by anti-war protesters earlier this year, the statement was made by an actor portraying Lincoln in an episode of "Star Trek."

"You cannot strengthen the weak by weakening the strong. You cannot help small men by tearing down big men. You cannot help the poor by destroying the rich."

Three of the famous "Ten Cannots" with which Lincoln is wrongly credited, including by former President Reagan at the 1992 Republican National Convention. They were written by a minister in 1916.

"The strength of the nation lies in the homes of its people."

Widely quoted on homebuilders' and real estate Web sites, the closest utterance resembling it is in an August 1928 speech by President Hoover: "The foundation of American life rests upon the home and the family."

"To sin by silence, when they should protest, makes cowards of men."

Cited by Gen. Douglas MacArthur in a speech after he was relieved of duty in Korea, it is from a poem by Ella Wheeler Wilcox.

– The Associated Press

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FORT WAYNE IN

Lincoln may have said a lot, but he didn't say it all

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. (AP) — When it comes to Abraham Lincoln, some of the people are fooled all of the time.

Remarks attributed to the quotable 16th president have popped up in everything from television commercials to speeches by famous generals, presidents and even recent antiwar protesters.

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Quotes by a minister, a poet and even an actor portraying Lincoln on an episode of "Star Trek" have been attributed to the president, according to Illinois state historian Thomas Schwartz

The preservation agency has added a page to its Web site that exposes famous sayings Lincoln never made. Among them:

- "To sin by silence, when they should protest, makes cowards of men."
- "There's no honorable way to kill, no gentle way to destroy. There's nothing good in war except its ending."
- "The strength of the nation lies in the homes of its people."

And then there's this one: "You can fool all the people some of the time and some of the people all of the time, but you cannot fool all of the people all of the time."

Allegedly part of a September 1858 speech in Clinton, the sentence does not show up in the text printed in the local newspaper, Schwartz said. The best evidence available comes from two people in 1910 recollecting that Lincoln said it in 1856.

Davis hopes the Web site, which also highlights fake Lincoln documents, will remind people "that there is such a thing as intellectual or scholarly honesty."

"And these are standards that need to be adhered to," he said.

On the Net

Lincoln facsimiles and misnomers:
www.illinoishistory.gov/facsimiles.htm
(no longer active)
The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln:
www.hti.umich.edu/l/lincoln/

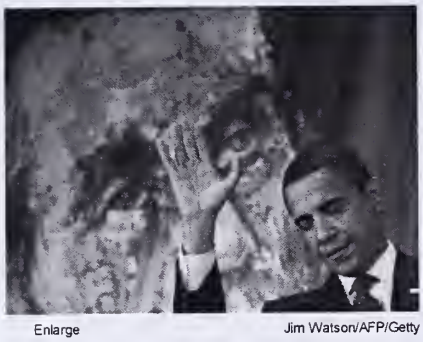
President Lincoln never said many of the quotes that people attribute to him.

By Knight Ridder Tribune



Honest, Mr. President: Abe Never Said It

by JOHN J. PITNEY JR.



Enlarge Jim Watson/AFP/Getty

In a recent speech to House Democrats, President Obama used an Abraham Lincoln quotation ... that Lincoln never actually said. Though the mistake has been made several times by past presidents, commentator John J. Pitney Jr. says such misquotes shouldn't go unnoticed.

March 25, 2010 text size A A A

John J. Pitney Jr. is the Roy P. Crocker professor of American politics at Claremont McKenna College. With Joseph M. Bessette, he is the author of American Government and Politics: Deliberation, Democracy, and Citizenship.

In his remarks to Democratic lawmakers the day before they passed the health care bill, President Obama said: "I was tooling through some of the writings of some previous presidents, and I came upon this quote by Abraham Lincoln: 'I am not bound to win, but I'm bound to be true. I'm not bound to succeed, but I'm bound to live up to what light I have.' "

The Lincoln quotation was stirring. It was also bogus. There is no documentary evidence that Lincoln ever said any such thing.

Obama is hardly the first speaker to pass counterfeit prose. A couple of entertaining reference books — *They Never Said It* by Paul Boller and John George, and *The Quote Verifier* by Ralph Keyes — are full of fake quotations and mis-attributions that have come into common usage. The process starts when an honest mistake or flight of fancy leads to the publication of a spurious passage. Seeing it in print, writers and speakers assume it to be genuine and repeat it. Then they copy one another, and the dubious words spread like a computer virus.

It is understandable that many of these cases involve Lincoln. By quoting the Great Emancipator's words, public figures try to capture some of his magic for themselves. The temptation to touch the hem of his garment is so great that they sometimes get sloppy about fact-checking and grab for a knockoff.

That temptation crosses partisan and ideological lines. President Reagan used the "bound to be true" line several times. (One may guess that President Obama's speechwriter got it from a Reagan speech and incorrectly took it for granted that the Gipper's staff had sourced it.) After his presidency, at the 1992 Republican convention, Reagan quoted this favorite of anti-tax groups: "You cannot strengthen the weak by weakening the strong. You cannot lift the wage earner by pulling down the wage payer. You cannot help the poor man by destroying the rich." Lincoln never used those words. They came from William Boetcker, a prominent minister of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Boetcker did not credit Lincoln with the lines, but some of his conservative admirers did.



Courtesy of John J. Pitney, Jr.

John J. Pitney, Jr. is a professor of American Politics at Claremont McKenna College. He is the co-author of *American Government: Deliberation, Democracy, and Citizenship.*

Liberals like to cite this faux Lincoln passage: "Corporations have been enthroned. An era of corruption will follow and the money power of the country will endeavor to prolong its reign by working upon the prejudices of the people until the wealth is aggregated in a few hands and the republic is destroyed." It has been in circulation ever since Populists concocted it in the late 1800s. Lincoln's personal secretary called it a "bald, unblushing forgery," and indeed it would have been inconsistent with Lincoln's career. As a lawyer in Illinois, Lincoln represented corporations in court and even did a bit of lobbying. Nevertheless, actor Warren Beatty deployed the quotation against special interests in a 1999 speech to the Southern California Americans for Democratic Action, as did journalist Joe Conason in *It Can Happen Here* and former vice president Al Gore in the hardcover version of *The Assault on Reason.*

Sometimes politicians quote Lincoln as a proud demonstration of their own humility. "As Abraham Lincoln said," asserted Vice President George H.W. Bush in 1988, "Here I stand — warts and all." Instead of Lincoln's own language, that line was a mashup of phrases usually attributed to other historical figures: "Here I stand" (Martin Luther) and "warts and all" (Oliver Cromwell). As William Safire explained at the time, there is even some doubt that Luther and Cromwell uttered those exact words.

Obama may have been aiming for the same level of modesty when he quoted the line about being bound neither to win nor succeed. But the first-person singular undercut the effect: He said "I" five times in two sentences.

Accuracy is important, and we should take note when presidents use fake quotations. In the end, though, we may be confident that the truth will come out. As President Clinton put it in 1994: "The greatest

Republican president — some of us think the greatest president we ever had — Mr. Lincoln, once said that you can fool all of the people some of the time, and you can fool some of the people all of the time, but you cannot fool all of the people all the time."

Then again, Lincoln didn't say that, either.

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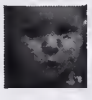
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Recent First



Freddie Coots (fredpet) wrote:
Thank you, Patrick; I did a quick search and found somebody else making the same complaint.

"John Pitney, Professor at Claremont McKenna College, on whose word a good deal of this article's credibility seems to hinge, is not fully credentialed. Let me clarify: he is a former Republican apparatchik, specifically, according to his CV, he was a senior domestic policy analyst for the House Republican Research Committee, responsible for background papers and public statements on a variety of domestic and economic issues. A bit later in his career, he was acting Research Department Director of the Republican National Committee. My experience with his past partisan quotes is that he is an expert at smoothly modulating his statements so that they do not seem partisan, but ALWAYS indicate Republican triumph, and it is shoddy journalism, of the kind that I don't expect from Adam Nagourney, that Pitney is quoted in this article without a reasonable description of his bias."
http://politicalmavens.com/index.php/2010/03/18/its-nice-to-be-proved-right/

(This is from his own site; he's being cocky about predicting that Barbara Boxer will have a tough time.)

I am sad to hear that Lincoln didn't really say that last line :-(
Friday, March 26, 2010 3:02:56 AM
Recommend (0) Report abuse



Patrick Gorey (pgorey) wrote:
It would be nice if the author disclosed his past close association with the Republican National Committee as a speech writer or as a staff member working with Dick Cheney. Not really the unbiased fair and balanced educational opinion I'd hope NPR would promote.
Thursday, March 25, 2010 11:03:02 PM
Recommend (0) Report abuse



Kludge McGee (rogue_opulence) wrote:
You Lie! - Joe Wilson
Thursday, March 25, 2010 10:08:07 PM
Recommend (1) Report abuse



Marcus Chandler (Marcopolis) wrote:
"But the first-person singular undercut the effect. He said "I" five times in two sentences."

He seems to have a habit of doing that.
Thursday, March 25, 2010 8:35:32 PM
Recommend (0) Report abuse



Matthew Scallon (MatthewCScallon) wrote:
@kate_is_great, be grateful I'm pro-life. Otherwise, I might feel the same way about you.
Thursday, March 25, 2010 7:42:01 PM
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Stephen Linton (Stepton) wrote:

Allen West's new book dotted with familiar, but fake, quotes...

Updated: 2:58 p.m. Thursday, April 3, 2014 | Posted: 2:50 p.m. Thursday, April 3, 2014

palmbeachpost.com



Former Rep. Allen West outlines his political philosophy, warrior code and experiences as a black conservative in a new book that's peppered with quotations attributed to Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, Abraham Lincoln and other famous figures.

Several of the quotes in West's "Guardian of the Republic" —including one that's also been used by President Barack Obama and Sen. John McCain —have a familiar ring from frequent repetition, but have been flagged by historians as erroneous.

"Thomas Jefferson said it first: 'A government big enough to give you everything you want is also big enough to take it away,'" West writes.

The quotation doesn't appear in Jefferson's writings, according to researchers at the Charlottesville, Va.-based Thomas Jefferson Foundation. But variations of it have appeared on coffee mugs and T-shirts with Jefferson's name and have ricocheted around the Internet enough that the foundation included it in a "Spurious Quotations" list of popular sayings misattributed to the Declaration of Independence drafter and third president.

Three other Jefferson quotes in West's book also appear on the foundation's list of debunked Jeffersonisms.

Asked this week to provide sources for the Jefferson quotes and some others in the book, West co-author Michele Hickford declined comment and a spokeswoman for Crown Publishing did not respond. West, who is touring to promote the book, could not be reached.

Misquoting presidents is an American tradition at least as old as Parson Weems' tale of young George Washington and the cherry tree and as current as Facebook posts and chain e-mails that can make inaccurate quotes go viral.

Obama (as a senator in 2005) and McCain (as a 2008 presidential candidate) are among those who have quoted George Washington as saying that "the willingness with which our young people are likely to serve in any war, no matter how justified, shall be directly proportional to how they perceive veterans of earlier wars were treated and appreciated by our nation."

West includes that quote in his book. But the words aren't Washington's, according to Mary V. Thompson, a research historian with the Fred W. Smith National Library for the Study of George Washington.

"We get asked about that one a lot. Congressmen tend to be very fond of that one…It's been around for a long time, but I don't know where it came from," Thompson said.

West's book quotes Lincoln as saying: "America will never be destroyed from the outside. If we falter and lose our freedoms, it will be because we destroyed ourselves."

The quote has appeared on bumper stickers and was attributed to Lincoln in the trailer for the 2013 movie "White House Down." But it didn't come from Lincoln, says James Cornelius, the curator of the Lincoln Collection at the Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield, Ill.

"That's not an accurate one. But the spirit is right from something he said," said Cornelius. Cornelius said the quote cited by West and others bears some resemblance to a passage in a speech Lincoln delivered as a young Illinois legislator in 1838.

"All the armies of Europe, Asia and Africa combined, with all the treasure of the earth (our own excepted) in their military chest; with a Buonaparte for a commander, could not by force, take a drink from the Ohio, or make a track on the Blue Ridge, in a trial of a thousand years," Lincoln said in the 1838 speech.

"At what point then is the approach of danger to be expected? I answer, if it ever reach us, it must spring up amongst us. It cannot come from abroad. If destruction be our lot, we must ourselves be its author and finisher. As a nation of freemen, we must live through all time, or die by suicide."

West's book quotes Alexis de Tocqueville, the 19th century French observer of America, as saying democracy "can only exist until the voters discover that they can vote themselves largesse from the public treasury. From that moment on, the majority always votes for the candidates promising the most benefits from the public treasury with the result being that a democracy collapses over loose fiscal policy, always followed by a dictatorship."

Tocqueville did see danger in big government, but the quote in West's book "certainly" is spurious, said Harvard historian Harvey Mansfield, who translated a 2000 edition of Tocqueville's seminal "Democracy In America."

A quote attributed to Patrick Henry in West's book didn't come from the 18th century Virginian's writings or speeches, said Henry biographer Thomas Kidd.

West quotes Henry as saying: "The Constitution is not an instrument for the government to restrain the people, it is an instrument for the people to restrain the government."

Kidd, a history professor at Baylor University in Texas, said the quote appears to be of relatively recent vintage and has taken on a life of its own on the Internet.

"The thing that's strange about that quote to me is it actually sounds like something that Henry might have said…I find it puzzling that it keeps getting used. You can find similar things that Henry has said that are actual quotes," Kidd said.

While the bogus quote bears some resemblance to Henry's actual sentiments, Kidd said the giants of American history deserve better.

"If we admire these people," Kidd said, "then I think we should represent what they actually said."